

## Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 ABF-01 OMB-01  
TRSE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07  
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P R 201515Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9338  
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY MASERU  
AMEMBASSY MBABANE  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
USMISSION GENEVA  
USUN NEW YORK 387

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 00207

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SREF, SEDU, BC, US  
SUBJECT: REFUGEE ASSISTANCE: GOB PLANS AND REQUIREMENTS

REF: A. STATE 11808 (NOTAL) B. GABORONE 188 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: BECASUSE OF ITS GEOGRAPHY, BOTSWANA HAS BECOME  
AN IMPORTANT OUTLET FOR REFUGEES FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES,  
PRINCIPALLY RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA. THIS MESSAGE EXPLORES  
THE BACKGROUND AND STATUS OF REFUGEE SITUATION AND OUTLINES  
RECENT GOB POLICY DECISIONS FOR DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM.  
IT CONCLUDES WITH ACTION REQUESTED TO MAKE U.S. EXPERT  
AVAILABLE TO GOB, ASSUMING U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO BOTH SHORT  
AND LONG-TERN RELIEF COULD BE ASSURED. END SUMMARY.  
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2. BOTSWAN'S THREE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES ARE AREAS OF  
TENSION AND TRANSITION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: NAMIBIA,  
RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA. IT IS GEOGRAPHICALLY IN  
THE FOREFRONT OF AFRICAN NATIONS WHICH OPPOSE NIEGH-  
BORING WHITE-RULED REGIMES. ALTHOUGH LARGE, BOTSWANA  
IS WEAK, POOR AND RELATIVELY UNPOPULATED. DESPITE ITS

WEAKNESSES, IT HAS BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN ITS INTEGRITY, ITS INDEPENDENCE AND (UNTIL RECENTLY) EVEN A RELATIVE DETACHMENT FROM ITS NEIGHBORS' TENSIONS. IT HAS DEVELOPED AS A MODERATE, PRAGMATIC, NON-RACIAL, DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY; INDEED, IN MANY RESPECTS THE ANTITHESIS OF ITS NEIGHBORS.

3. IN THE SUMMER OF 1976, HOWEVER, THE FLOW OF REFUGEES FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES FORCED BOTSWANA TO MAKE CHOICES IT HAD HITHERTO BEEN ABLE TO AVOID. ITS DECISIONS WERE DICTATED BY OBJECTIVE FACTORS: ECONOMIC, GEOGRAPHIC, AND POLITICAL. AFTER GOB'S AGONIZING FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, WE HAVE NOW LEARNED FROM SOURCES IN THE PRESIDENCY, WHERE A SPECIAL WORKING GROUP ON THE SUBJECT WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE LATTER PART OF 1976, THAT FUNDAMENTAL POLICY DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE: FIRST, BOTSWANA WILL NOT ONLY TEMPORARILY ADMIT REFUGEES BUT WILL TRY TO PROVIDE LONG-TERM ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING TRAINING, FOR THEM. THIS DECISION, IMPOSED BY CIRCUMSTANCES, REFLECTED ATTITUDES ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA AND THE THIRD WORLD. DESPITE ITS ECONOMIC WEAKNESS, CONCERN ABOUT THE RISKS OF INVOLVEMENT AND OF DISPLEASING ITS NEIGHBORS, IT COULD NOT TURN REFUGEES AWAY. BACKGROUND TO THIS DECISION REVEALED GOB AWARENESS OF CONSEQUENCES: POTENTIAL INTERNAL INSTABILITY CREATED BY THE PRESENCE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES (THE SPECTRE OF A PALESTINIAN PROBLEM WAS OCCASIONALLY CITED): THE POSSIBLE ATTRACTION OF MANY ADDITIONAL REFUGEES IF THE GOB WERE TO GIVE THEM GOOD TREATMENT AND, CONVERSELY, THE DANGER OF VIGOROUS CRITI-

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CISM IF GOB TREATMENT WERE JUDGED INSUFFICIENT, IN SHORT, THE DANGERS AND DIFFICULTIES INHERENT IN ABSORBING ON A SEMI-PERMANENT BASIS A RELATIVELY SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF POLITICALLY ACTIVE, SEMI-ORGANIZED REFUGEES INTO A SMALL BODY POLITIC. SECOND, IN ADDITION TO SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES, THE GOB IS INVITING ASSISTANCE FROM FRIENDLY COUNTRIES ON A BILATERAL BASIS, TO HELP SOLVE THE LONG-TERM PROBLEM CREATED BY THE REFUGEES. IN A MEETING JANUARY 19, CHARLES TIBONE, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, OUTLINED GOB DECISIONS AND REQUIREMENTS, ESPECIALLY EMPHASIZING THAT GOB HOPES U.S. WILL BE ABLE TO ASSIST, EITHER BILATERALLY OR THROUGH UNHCR. FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF GOB THINKING AND REQUESTS ARISING FROM IT.

4. TIBONE FIRST ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOB IS THE PROCESS OF PREPARING AN OVERALL REFUGEE PROJECT. (THIS PARTICULARLY GRATIFYING IN VIEW OF PREVIOUSLY RATHER AMORPHOUS GOB REFUGEE POLICY). HE DESCRIBED PROJECT AS AWAITING

MINISTERIAL INPUTS AND CONCURRENCES. AS TIBONE EXPLAINED IT, GOB DEVIDES REFUGEE PROBLEM INTO THREE CATEGORIES:

(A) ZIMBABWEANS IN FRANCISTOWN AREA AWAITING ONWARD TRANSPORTATION, MOST OF WHOM ARE DESTINED FOR MILITARY TRAINING OUTSIDE BOTSWANA;

(B) SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS, MOST OF WHOM CONCENTRATED IN GABORONE AREA AND SEEKING TO FURTHER THEIR EDUCATION;

(C) SMALLER GROUP CONSISTING OF ZIMBABWEANS WHO SEEK EDUCATION RATHER THAN MILITARY TRAINING, SOUTH AFRICANS WHO SEEK EMPLOYMENT RATHER THAN EDUCATION, AND OTHERS.

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THESE THREE GROUPS ARE CONSIDERED IN DETAIL BELOW.

5. ZIMBABWEANS: GOB'S POLICY TOWARD MILITARILY DESITINED ZIMBABWEANS IS TO PROVIDE THEM BASIC MAINTENANCE OVER THE SHORT TERM AND SHIP THEM OUT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. MAXIMUM TIME CONTEMPLATED FOR THEIR STAY IN BOTSWANA IS APPROXIAMTELY SIX MONTHS. AT PRESENT THERE ARE OVER 500 SUCH REFUGEES IN THE FRANCISTOWN REFUGEE CENTER, IN FACILITIES DESIGNED FOR HOUSING 300. (TIBONE EXPLAINED THAT THE RECENT INFLUX OF ZIMBABWEANS, WHICH SWELLED THEIR NUMBERS TO OVER 800, WAS IN PART HOUSED IN PRISONS). FOR THIS GROUP, GOB IS PLANNING TO EXPAND EXISITING FRANCISTOWN FACILITIES BY ADDINGTWO MORE DORMITORIES, THUS INCREASING OPTIMUM CAPACITY TO 500, WHICH "IN A PINCH" SHOULD BE ADQUATE TO HOUSE 700-800. UNHCR HAS PROMISED 27,000 DOLLARS TO ASSIST IN THIS PROJECT.

SHORT NUMBERS OF ZIMBABWEANS EXCEED 800, GOB WOULD PLAN TO ESTABLISH THEM ELSEWHERE; FRANCISTOWN IS REGARDED AS HAVING INADQUATE SECURITY TO PROTECT THEM AND AVAIL-ABLE SPACE AT THE REFGUEE CENTER WILL HAVE BEEN EXCEEDED. IN THIS EVENT, BO WOULD REQUIRE INFRASTRUCTURE AND TEMPORARY HOUSING (TIBONE SUGGESTED TENTS HOUSING 45 MEN EACH) TO PROVIDE FOR POSSIBLE INFLUX OF REFUGEES.

TIBONE SAID THIS GROUP OF REFUGEES HAS BEEN COSTING BO APPROXIMATELY P10,000 PER MONTH IN CARE AND MAINTENANCE. AT PRESENT TIME, UNHCR IS PROHIBITED FROM USING ORGINARY BUDGET TO SUPPORT RHODESIANS, AS THEY ARE CONSIDERED A U.K. PROBLEM (NOR IS U.K. HELPING THEM). ON JANUARY 1,

WORLD FOOD PROGRAM BEGAN THREE-MONTH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
BY PROVIDING SURPLUS COMMODITIES. REFUGEES STILL LACK  
MEAT, VEGETABLES AND OTHER NECESSARY DIETARY ELEMENTS.  
GOB DOES NOT KNOW EHRE IT WILL FIND MONEY TO FEED  
REFUGEE IF PROGRAM SHOULD END ON MARCH 31 (BUT WE  
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UNDERSTAND WFP WOULD MOST LIKELY RENEW IT).

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P 210540Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9339

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GABORONE 0207

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

6. SOUTH AFRICANS: THIS GROUP MOSTLY FROM SOWETO AND  
CONCENTRATED IN GABORONE. BECAUSE THEY GENERALLY ESCHEW  
MILITARY TRAINING, SEEK EDUCATION AND ARE MOSTLY SECON-  
DARY STUDENTS, GOB FINDS THEM EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO  
MOVE AND THEREFORE HAS DECIDED TO TRY TO PROVIDE FOR  
THEM FOR "ONE TO TWO YEARS". TO MEET NEEDS OF THIS  
GROUP, GOB IS CONSIDERING ESTABLISHING A SECONDARY LEVEL

"VOCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC SCHOOL/CAMP" LOCATED SOME DISTANCE FROM GABORONE. TIBONE THOUGHT STUDENTS MIGHT IDEALLY BE GIVEN VOCATIONAL TRAINING FIRST TO ENABLE THEM TO BUILD THEIR OWN FACILITIES. THIS WOULD REQUIRE TEMPORARY HOUSING INITIALLY, WITH EVENTUAL PROVISION ON PERMANENT FACILITIES FOR SCHOOL, DORMITORIES AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE.

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TIBONE SAID THERE ARE NOW SOME 400 SOUTH AFRICANS IN THIS CATEGORY BUT GOB WAS CONSIDERING SCHOOL FOR PERHAPS 600. UNHCR CURRENTLY PROVIDING SUBSISTENCE AT THE RATE OF P200 PER MONTH, AN AMOUNT WHICH IS INSUFFICIENT TO MEET THEIR NEEDS, ALTHOUGH THIS WILL BE INCREASED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, PROBABLY TO P30/MONTH.

IN NOVEMBER TIBONE WROTE A NUMBER OF AGENCIES REQUESTING ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES. ONE RESULT WAS A GRANT OF 50,000 DOLLARS FROM UNHCR TO BE USED FOR "IMMEDIATE RELIEF AND OTHER MEASURES CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO ASSIST THESE NEW INFLUXES OF REFUGEES." TIBONE SPECULATES THAT PERHAPS THE BEST USE OF THIS FUND WOULD BE TO SEED THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT. SECONDLY, IUEF RESPONDED TO TIBONE'S LETTER BY APPROACHING THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT AND FMG AGREE TO TAKE UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF SECONDARY STUDENTS. TO SCREEN MOST ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES, IUEF HAS INTERVIEWED SOME 160 PERSONS IN BOTSWANA. TIBONE DID NOT KNOW WHEN NIGERIANS WOULD ACTUALLY BEGIN ACCEPTING SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS. ADDITIONALLY, IUEF MAY ALSO BE ABLE TO PLACE SOME SOUTH AFRICANS IN OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

7. MIXED GROUP: THIS IS RELATIVELY SMALL IN NUMBERS. SOME THIRTY ZIMBABWEANS, WHO OPT FOR EDUCATION RATHER THAN MILITARY SERVICE, ARE CURRENTLY HOUSED ON A FARM NORTH OF GABORONE. GOB SUGGESTS THIS GROUP MIGHT WELL BE INTEGRATED INTO THE PROPOSED SECONDARY SCHOOL FACILITIES DESIGNED FOR GROUP TWO ABOVE. AS FOR THE SMALL NUMBER OF SOUTH AFRICANS WHO EITHER WANT JOBS IN LIEU OF EDUCATION OR WANT NEITHER, THE OBVIOUS PLACE FOR THEM WOULD BE AT THE VOCATIONAL FACILITIES PLANNED IN CONNECTION WITH THE SECONDARY SCHOOL.

THERE ARE ALSO SOME 300 BASUTO REFUGEES IN BOTSWANA.

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MOST ARE OVER THIRTY, MAY ARE ALREADY EMPLOYED AND TO DATE THEY DO NOT PRESENT A SOCIAL PROBLEM AS DO THE SOWETO STUDENTS. THEY ARE, HOWEVER, A FURTHER DRAIN ON GOB AND UNHCR RESOURCES. GOB WOULD CONSIDER ESTABLISHING THEM IN AN AGRICULTURAL SCHEME, PERHAPS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SCHOOL-CAMP.

8. COMMENT: AS IS EVIDENT FROM THE ABOVE, BOTSWANA IS EMBARKING ON COURSE OF ACTION WHICH (HOWEVER COSTLY) IS IMPOSED ON IT BY BOTH POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS. THE OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE IT SEEKS COULD TAKE THE FORM OF SHORT-RANGE RELIEF EFFORTS AND/OR LONGER-RANGE (E.G., TRAINING) PROJECTS. THE GOB'S NEEDS CAN ALSO BE DIVIDED PRINCIPALLY INTO (A) ONE-TIME CAPITAL EXPENDITURES, E.G. FOR BUILDING MATERIALS, TENTS AND ASSOCIATED CONSTRUCTION AND TRANSPORT COSTS, AND (B) RECURRENT BUDGET COSTS SUCH AS SUBSISTENCE OF STUDENTS AND SCHOOL OPERATIONS. WE HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THE GOB MINFINANCE AND PLANNING WILL BE ASKED TO WORK OUT COST ESTIMATES. BUT FROM CURRENT INDICATIONS, IT IS CLEAR THAT A SIGNIFICANT INITIAL INVESTMENT COST WILL BE REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH THE "SCHOOL/CAMP", TO ENLARGE THE FRANCISTOWN FACILITY, ACQUIRE TENTS, ETC., WITH MINIMUM (WE ESTIMATE) OF TWO MILLION DOLLARS NECESSARY FOR THE SCHOOL/CAMP ALONE.

9. RECOMMENDATION: THAT THE U.S. PREPARE TO RESPOND PROMPTLY TO A GOB REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN CARRYING OUT PLANS FOR DEALING WITH REFUGEES STAYING IN BOTSWANA. (THIS SHOULD BE IN ADDITION TO ANY USG ASSISTANCE FOR THE EDUCATION OF REFUGEES IN THE U.S. AS REQUESTED GABORONE 188). IDEALLY, THE USG CONTRIBUTION SHOULD BE BOTH EMERGENCY RELIEF AND PROJECT AID. WHAT A FAIR US CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE WOULD DEPEND ON THE OTHER DONORS.

10. ACTION REQUESTED: IF THERE IS ASSURANCE THAT BOTH FORMS OF AID TO GOB WOULD BE FORTHCOMING FOR USG, WE  
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WOULD RECOMMEND AS FIRST STEP THAT SERVICES OF AN EXPERT IN EMERGENCY FOOD DISTRIBUTION AND HOUSING, WHO COULD ALSO ASSIST IN DESIGNING PROPOSED SCHOOL/CAMP, BE OFFERED TO GAB ASAP. WE EMPHASIZE THAT THIS INDIVIDUAL SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED EXPERT IN HIS FIELD, AND THAT HIS MISSION (CONTINGENT OF COURSE ON GOB ACCEPTANCE) SHOULD NOT DELAY SHORT-TERM PROVISION OF EMERGENCY RELIEF. BY SEPTEL EMBASSY WILL BE SUBMITTING FURTHER SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPONSE TO STATE 11808.

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## Message Attributes

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